The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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SUMMER BY THE LAKESIDE.

NOON.

White clouds, whose shadows haunt the deep,
Light mists, whose soft embraces keep
The sunshine on the hills asleep!

O isles of calm! O dark, still wood!
And stiller skies that overbrood
Your rest with deeper quietude!

O shapes and hues, dim beckoning, through
Yon mountain gaps, my longing view
Beyond the purple and the blue,

To stiller sea and greener land,
And softer lights and airs more bland,
And skies,—the hollow of God's hand!

Transfused through you, O mountain friends!
With mine your solemn spirit blends,
And life no more hath separate ends.

I read each misty mountain sign,
I know the voice of wave and pine;
And I am yours, and ye are mine.

Life's burdens fall, its discords cease,
I lapse into the glad release
Of Nature's own exceeding peace.

O welcome calm of heart and mind!
As falls yon fir-tree's loosened rind
To leave a tenderer growth behind,
So fall the weary years away.
A child again, my head I lay
Upon the lap of this sweet day.

This western wind hath Lethean powers,
Yon noonday cloud nepenthe showers,
The lake is white with lotus-flowers!

Even Duty's voice is faint and low;
And slumberous Conscience, waking slow,
Forgets her blotted scroll to show.

The Shadow which pursues us all,
Whose ever-nearing steps appall,
Whose voice we hear behind us call,—

That Shadow blends with mountain gray,
It speaks but what the light waves say,—
Death walks apart from Fear to-day!

Rocked on her breast, these pines and I
Alike on Nature's love rely;
And equal seems to live or die.

Assured that He whose presence fills
With light the spaces of these hills
No evil to his creatures wills,

The simple faith remains that he
Will do, whatever that may be,
The best alike for man and tree.

What mosses over one shall grow,
What light and life the other know,
Unanxious, leaving Him to show.

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

THE MORAL POWER IN HISTORY.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard-seed."

Then the parable shows that, because the seed is alive, the tree, and the trees that grow from it, will overshadow the earth.

He searches eagerly for parables. Moral power, however small its beginnings, comes to the central of all life, physical or intellectual. Or, in Bible language, the sway of God, the rule of God, the kingdom of God, though it seem weak at the beginning, is infinite in the end.

To this great reality of life we have to recur again and again, as he did. We

speak of it after nineteen centuries. He spoke as a prophet whom nobody believed. We see the growth of the forest of mustard-trees, we hear the twitter and song of the birds in the branches. All he could show was the seed, and say it was alive and would certainly grow.

The great holidays, the annual spring-time, every occasion which renews our study of the foundations,— these bring us back to find new and more illustrations of the supremacy of moral power,—of what the Bible calls the kingdom or the reign of God. Churches have no reason for being so distinct as the proclamation of the infinite power which sways the craft or subtlety of statesmen or the wrath and strength of soldiers. God reigns, behind them all.

Naturally enough, people do not easily see far beyond the dust of their own carriage wheels or the smoke of their own cannons.

Thus this century of ours does not enough appreciate the origin of its victories, and I suppose that has been true of every century. Perhaps men are always prone to say, "Go to! and see what we have done, see what we are doing." I suppose the sixteenth century said it when they had discovered America and practically had discovered the Indies. "See what great discoverers we are. See how we have discovered what nobody knew before." Undoubtedly, all Protestant Europe said it at the end of that century. "See how we have waked the dead. See how we have reformed the church." Certainly, the people of our own country said it two hundred years ago. "See how we have subdued the coast of the Atlantic. In the year 1600 there was not a white man on these shores north of Florida. See this line of States which we have created, independent all but in name." And again, one hundred years ago, our own fathers were boasting of the great social and political changes wrought by our Revolution, by the French Revolution, by that whole tide of philosophical speculation which had then revealed itself. All this is just as we wonder at what our own generation has seen: the scientific discoveries, the physical revolutions, which have wholly changed the personal life of every one of us, such as the marvel which enables me to write the words on the shore of the Pacific which within a week I read to you here on the shore of the Atlantic. It is very hard for each generation not to overstate the relative importance of its own work. We do not properly make out the perspective of history.

What is the origin of this advance? What was the Easter egg from which this advancing Life was born? Men tell you that this intellectual triumph, that that physical discovery, or that such and such a mechanical invention, have set the world forward by a new stride in its career. And so they have. But all the more is it necessary to renew the statement of the point from which these strides step forward. All the more must we proclaim that the moral forces, and they alone, give the victory to invention, to discovery, to speculation, to philosophy. Every stride, every improvement, every victory, begins as man is really conscious of his own infinite power. It begins when he knows what the words Infinite Life mean, and each successive victory is but one evidence more that man is the immortal child of God. Here is what we mean when we say that the kingdom of God truly comes. This world has a ruler, it is not left to chance; and this ruler is the Father of mankind, the God of the universe.

To take again the Saviour's figures, one cell of yeast becomes a thousand cells. Each of the thousand becomes a thousand; and in this simple multiplication of life, almost before the housewife knows it, the whole lump is leavened. The mustard-seed is very small. But it is alive. So the mustard-seed has this infinite power of enlargement. It plants itself. The plant grows. A thousand, thousand seeds are born from it, and in the branches of the trees that spring from them the birds of heaven take their shelter.

He would have liked the illustration which they gave me in California. When I was there four years ago, Southern California was in terror because a new pest was preying upon its orange orchards. A certain woolly scale—it looked like fleecy cotton wool—spread all over the new branches and green twigs of the tree. No brushing or hand-picking or spraying diminished it. For a year or more the golden harvest of the paradise for all coming years seemed to be in danger. At which crisis there arrived

at San Francisco the antidote for this pest. In a few little pasteboard boxes, such as a child carries in his hands, were brought a few of those friends of man who are now called the Vedalia. They are little lady-birds, rather smaller than the lady-birds of our gardens and of our nursery songs. And these little strangers were distributed in some of the orchards worst infested by the cotton scale. And men thought they were lost. They *were* lost,—poor little apostles of life in that desert of death. But, before two months were over, they were found again,—they or their children or their children's children. And the scale had absolutely disappeared from the orchards which they had purified. It has now virtually disappeared from Southern California. Thanks for the law of growth which has multiplied the little one into a thousand!

Such are the poor parables by which we try to make faithless men comprehend the infinite power of the law of love, which started on its great mission to a dying world the day when Mary said to John, "He is not here, he is risen!" when John said it to Peter, when Peter said it to ten others. Those ten went out into the world, into the desert of death, if you please. But they proclaimed right and left, behind and before, the gospel which was to quicken men for all inventions, for all discoveries, for all victories. It is the gospel which proclaims that man is the child of God, and that the kingdom of God is at hand.

We cannot attempt in two or three minutes to study the course of history for eighteen hundred years. But I may cite one or two salient illustrations, either of which is worth careful study. Think, for instance, how the world has lost and is losing its reverence for mere force and its reliance upon it. Yes, it is true that the world has engines of destruction such as Cæsar never dreamed of. But, all the same, even the strongest monarchs do not dare to rely upon them. They cannot go to war without proving or trying to prove they are in the right. He who does not enlist the moral opinion of the world upon his side has failed before he begins the battle, and knows he has.

One may go much farther than battle; for all mutual interest in men and women, as such, is modern. All care for the blind and the deaf, the idiot and the insane, the prisoner and the captive, is modern. The day Jesus Christ died, any father of a child in the Roman Empire might have struck that boy dead as they sat together at the table, and he would not have been answerable for it at Roman law. A thousand men or women, ten thousand, might have starved to death in the slums of Alexandria or Rome, and no finger would have been lifted for their relief, not though some Cleopatra at the moment were giving to some Antony some mad banquet of extravagance.

This is what I mean when I say that nobody cared for man as man. Why should he? If man's life were only of the same quality as the life of a toadstool! Why should one care if man simply sprouted for a few years of life, coming nobody knows whence and going nobody knows where! No, it is not till the Lord of Life makes it clear to his brothers and sisters that they are sons of God and God's daughters, that they live in God and move in God, that they live for his purposes and bring in his reign. It is not till then that their help or their preservation becomes a duty or a privilege. Let us know that, and there is no care so tender, no expense so lavish, but we will devote ourselves to lifting these men up when they have fallen down, for the care of these darling children, or to loving-kindness for any who are in need. Listen to the great proclamation of Easter that God is, and that man's life is infinite, and all charities and philanthropies and altruisms follow of course. But till the world hears that proclamation, why, it is relegated, left to the sway of mere force, or of what men have come to call the empire of the devil.

If, again, you compare the changes in men's motives from what they were then to what they are now, the difference between that petty life and our lives, which are really infinite, is like the change from midnight to mid-day. And this change is wholly the gift of Jesus Christ. As he said, that was what he came for,—"to give life more abundantly."

The man who was born in Capernaum probably died in Capernaum. The woman who welcomed the Saviour to the upper chamber lived in Jerusalem; and her thought never went beyond Jerusalem, till one happy day, when the Lord of life opened her eyes

also to see. She drank of the Water of Life, and saw that she was not a poor slave of time whose home was in that court-yard, but a child of the infinite God, who shared with him in the glory of his universe.

On the great holidays and on the great days of mourning, this lesson of moral force renews itself. Or if Mr. Webster dies, or Mr. Emerson, or any other of the great men, you do not find at an open grave that you are going back with satisfaction to any great victory of argument. It is not intellectual power which you recollect, any more than it is physical grace. You go behind these to the moral traits which mark the alliance of these men with the living God,—the deeds of kindness, the prophecy of faith, of the hopeful life. And in the same way, when on New Year's Day or Easter or Forefathers' Day or the Day of Independence you try to unravel past history and see where its miracles begin, you find the old lesson of the growth of the leaven, the increase of the mustard-seed, the flash of lightning. You find the lesson of moral force behind intellectual subtlety or physical power,—the eternal lesson for our daily lives, the lesson for the training of our children, the lesson for the choice of our friends.

On the Pacific shore I repeated to some one the old story, which you hear me lay down so often, that every man should see every day some one whom he knew to be his superior. And the hasty answer was that that would be hard doctrine for a statesman like Gladstone. But I said no, Gladstone might well find, in a village walk at Hawarden, some woman who kept her temper better than he kept his, or who lived in a more loving life. These are our real superiors,—the people who live by these infinite principles, and are not satisfied with intellectual parade more than by the gratification of physical appetites. These children who are given us, do not let us watch them as the heathen would, to note whether the brain of this one is more subtle in analysis than the brain of that one. Do not let us praise them for this bright repartee or that marvellous bit of memory. Whoever shall be able to look back upon their lives will be grateful or indifferent according as this one or that one were affectionate, were hopeful, or as they lived in faith.

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever."

And so is it that the kingdom comes. Mr. Shaler says—and, what is more, he proves—that Christendom swept down the hordes of Mahomet in the critical battle of Tours, because the Christians of Brittany and Flanders had been more tender and loving in the care of their war-horses than the brutal men who had marched through Eastern Europe, caring for themselves, and negligent of the noble animals who were to bear them in the shock of battle. Robert Stevenson says, and proves, that the existence of the locomotive to-day, and the change which the locomotive has made in our social arrangements, are due to the moral qualities of the English workman who wrought in the little machine-shop where the "Rocket," the first of his engines, was prepared for the great crisis of her trial. You cannot read the life of Columbus without seeing that his intellectual speculations were indeed ridiculous, his cosmogony of the world was absurd. But you would at the same time see that he lived and moved and had his being in his God, that he was a man of infinite power, because a man of infinite faith and hope and love.

And this is what Jesus Christ means and meant and will mean when he says, "Seek ye first the reign of God, and all these things shall be added unto you."—*Edward E. Hale, D.D.*

THE STILL HOUR.

Like the bird be thou,
That for a moment rests
Upon the topmost bough.
He feels the branch to bend,
And yet as sweetly sings,
Knowing that he has wings.
—*Victor Hugo.*

I wonder did you ever count
The value of one human fate,
Or sum the infinite amount
Of one heart's treasure, and the weight
Of life's one venture, and the whole
Concentrate purpose of a soul?
—*Adelaide A. Procter.*

None of us can live well by an occasional good resolution, any more than a seed can

grow into a healthy plant by being used as a common plaything, and only now and then put into the earth for a minute or two. Everything depends on storing up in ourselves, by a habit of well-doing, a great and ever-increasing fund of moral power which shall be available to brace us against sudden temptation, to help us carry out better purposes, and to hold us steady and true to the ideal. Salvation is right character. Right character is salvation. We need no other, as our bodies need nothing better than perfect health. But right character, —is that a small matter and easily gained? Is it not a product of all the highest and finest forces of the universe, a result of the long, steady working together of the Divine Spirit and the human spirit? The life principles must be deeply set. There must be the "clean heart" and the "sound mind." There must be an all-mastering love of good. There must be a well-established and well-administered inward government, not dependent on human opinions or customs. The right law must be written on the heart,—all one thing with the life's love. Is not this what Jesus means by "the kingdom of God within you"?—*C. G. Ames.*

It is worth realizing that there is no such thing as commonplace life or uninteresting circumstances. They are so only because we do not see into them, do not know them.

Religion is the conscious reunion of the soul with God. . . . If religion does not "bind" us to God, it is superficial and worthless. It is valuable only so far as it does this.—*W. F. Evans.*

In the soul God reveals himself to man. It is the door into the infinite presence, once opened never shut. Deep questions must be answered by deep thought. As we live from the spirit, so flows the spirit upon us; and the soul becomes the everlasting son, the continual recipient of God.

Serve God, and be cheerful. Live nobly.
Do right and do good. Make the best
Of the gifts and the work put before you,
And to God, without fear, leave the rest.
—*William Newell.*

Do the duty which lies nearest thee.—*Goethe.*

AUGUST.

Silence again. The glorious symphony
Hath need of pause and interval of peace.
Some subtle signal bids all sweet sounds cease,
Save hum of insects' aimless industry.
Pathetic summer seeks by blazonry
Of color to conceal her swift decrease.
Weak subterfuge! Each mocking day doth fleece
A blossom, and lay bare her poverty.
Poor middle-aged summer! Vain this show!
Whole fields of golden-rod cannot offset
One meadow with a single violet.
And well the singing thrush and lily know,
Spite of all artifice which her regret
Can deck in splendid guise, their time to go.
—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

BIOGRAPHY.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON.

The problem why certain men and women come to eminence, and why others, with apparently as much ability, remain forever in obscurity, is an interesting one to solve. Most persons desire fame, most persons desire wealth; but, for one reason or another, thousands fail to achieve what they desire. They lack either singleness of aim or adequate perseverance, or determined will or sound judgment, or, instead of mastering circumstances, they permit circumstances to master them.

Audubon's life furnishes a unique illustration of the result of having a definite purpose, and bending all one's energies to it till success is attained.

John James Audubon was born at New Orleans, May 4, 1780, in the land of orange groves and magnolias, of birds and sunshine. His grandfather was a poor fisherman of La Vendée, France, with twenty-one children. Unable to support them, they made their way in life as best they could.

When John's father was twelve years old, the fisherman gave him "a shirt, a dress of warm clothing, his blessing and a cane, and sent him out to seek his fortune." He went to Nantes, shipped before the mast, at twenty-one commanded a vessel, and at twenty-five was owner and captain of a small craft.

Going to St. Domingo, West Indies, he purchased a small estate. Ambitious, as are

all persons who succeed, he soon secured an appointment from the governor of St. Domingo, returned to France, made the acquaintance of influential men, and obtained an appointment in the imperial navy, with the command of a small vessel-of-war.

Frequently visiting America in his ship, Audubon purchased land in Louisiana, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. In the former State he married a lady of Spanish extraction, Anne Moynette, both beautiful and wealthy. Of their three sons and one daughter, John James was the youngest son. The mother was not spared to rear the distinguished naturalist, but perished a few years after his birth, in the insurrection of the colored people of St. Domingo. The father, having purchased a beautiful estate on the Loire, nine miles from Nantes, married a second time, a woman who proved a most indulgent mother to the husband's children. Having none of her own, she humored John in every way, and allowed him to gather moss, curious stones, birds' nests, indeed everything which belongs to natural history, to his heart's content.

On the return of Commodore Audubon to France, finding that the boy was following the bent of his own mind, to the neglect of a solid education, in spite of the tears and entreaties of his wife, he sent him away to school. For a year John was obliged to apply himself closely to mathematics, taking a ramble to collect specimens whenever it was possible. He studied drawing under the celebrated painter David, and learned to play well on the violin, flute, flageolet, and guitar.

His father had hope that he would become a soldier under Napoleon; but a lad who could lie on his back under a tree for three weeks, and watch with a telescope the habits of some little gray birds of the color of the bark of the tree, would not care much for the smoke and din of battle. He was therefore sent to America to look after his father's property.

With a heavy heart the youth said good-by to France, where he had already sketched two hundred varieties of birds from life. Arriving in New York, he became ill with yellow fever, and was carried to the home of two Quaker ladies in Morristown, whose kindness doubtless saved his life. When he recovered, he went to his father's farm at Mill Grove, near the Schuylkill Falls, Pennsylvania, and found, as he said, "a blessed spot." He was free now to study natural history,—no more mathematics, no more urging to become a soldier. He was delighted with the mill attached to the property, and with the pewees who built their nests near by. "Hunting, fishing, and drawing occupied every moment," he says. "Cares I knew not, and cared nothing for them."

An English gentleman, William Bakewell, owned the adjoining property. Audubon, being French, did not court the acquaintance of the Englishman, indeed avoided him, till one day, as he was following some grouse down the creek in winter, he met Mr. Bakewell.

"I was struck with the kind politeness of his manners," says Audubon, "and found him a most expert marksman, and entered into conversation. I admired the beauty of his well-trained dogs, and finally promised to call upon him and his family. Well do I recollect the morning when for the first time I entered the Bakewell household. It happened that Mr. Bakewell was from home. I was shown into a parlor, where only one young lady was snugly seated at work, with her back turned toward the fire. She rose on my entrance, offered me a seat, and assured me of the gratification her father would feel on his return, which, she added with a smile, would be in a few minutes, as she would send a servant after him. Talking and working, the young lady who remained made the time pass pleasantly enough, and to me especially so. It was she who afterward became my wife and the mother of my children." Mr. Bakewell soon returned, and lunch was provided before starting on a shooting expedition.

Thus was begun a beautiful affection that ran like a thread of gold through the darkness and light of two struggling lives. The friendship increased as the months went by; for the youth, alone in a strange country, devoted to his foster-mother, needed a woman's love and tenderness to cheer him. Lucy Bakewell taught Audubon English, and he in return gave her drawing lessons.

Here at Mill Grove, while yet a boy, he planned his great work, the "Birds of America," their habits, and a description of them. This one idea dominated Audubon's

life. Through poverty and suffering this one idea was ever before him.

One writer has well said of Audubon: "For sixty years or more he followed, with more than religious devotion, a beautiful and devoted pursuit, enlarging its boundaries by his discoveries and illustrating its objects by his art. In all climates and in all weathers, scorched by burning suns, drenched by piercing rains, frozen by the fiercest colds, now diving fearlessly into the densest forest, now wandering alone over the most savage regions, in perils, in difficulties, and in doubts, with no companion to cheer his way, far from the smiles and applause of society, listening only to the sweet music of birds or to the sweeter music of his own thoughts, he faithfully kept his path."

At this time "a partner, tutor, and monitor," Da Costa, whom Audubon's father had sent over to superintend a lead-mine enterprise at Mill Grove, refused to give money to the son, and objected to his marrying Lucy Bakewell. Resenting the dictation of Da Costa, young Audubon determined to go to France and lay the matter before his father. Da Costa would give him no money, but a letter of credit upon an agent in New York. The youth walked all the way to New York, was refused the money by the agent, who hinted that the lad should be seized and shipped to China, borrowed his passage money, went to France, caused the removal of Da Costa, and obtained his father's consent to his marriage. For a year he remained at Nantes, shooting, stuffing birds, and drawing for his beloved book. Then, all Frenchmen being liable to conscription under Napoleon, the commodore obtained leave for his son to return to America.

On his return he sold his place, invested his capital in goods, married Lucy Bakewell, April 8, 1808, when he was twenty-eight years old, and started for the West. They were twelve days in sailing down the Ohio River in a flat-bottomed boat called an ark. He engaged in trade at Louisville, and the young couple were extremely happy. Fortunate it was that they had those few months of comfort, for hardship was soon to test their affection.—*From "Famous Men of Science," by Sarah K. Bolton.*

(To be continued.)

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all matter for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book.*" This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.— Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated, all* books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Libraries.

Standing requests for libraries from: —

Mrs. O. A. Langston, Sidney, Comanche County, Texas;

Mrs. C. S. Stowell, Magnolia, Boulder County, Colorado;

Mr. Davis M'Carn, Anamosa, Iowa;

Mrs. D. Jayne, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York;

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire;

Stephen D. Rhoden, La Pine, Crenshaw County, Alabama;

Mrs. Isadore E. Rice, Oakland, Oregon.

Mrs. Margaret Ogilvie, "The Bonnie Briars," Grand Junction, Colorado. Mrs. Ogilvie is struggling to place in each school in her county, where the school committee will furnish a bookcase, a collection of good books. She has already supplied several schools, but there are three or four more in which she is particularly interested.

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.)

Will those who were sending reading for distribution to Rev. S. G. Davis, Limona, Florida, please send to Mrs. Abel Morrill, Seffner, Hillsborough County, Florida? Mrs. Morrill has kindly consented to carry on the good work which Mr. Davis started.

Mrs. H. H. Harvey, Seffner, Florida, would like any back numbers of the *Outlook*.

Cora Crewdson, Payson, Illinois, would be pleased to receive any of H. B. Stowe's writings except "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "The Home at Graylock," "John Halifax," and "Not like other Girls." Miss Crewdson is a helpless shut-in, confined to her bed for thirty years, a patient sufferer from spinal trouble.

A. I. Lyle, Malinda, Jackson County, Georgia, asks *The Cheerful Letter* readers for pieces for young boys and girls suitable for Sunday-school celebrations.

Mrs. F. T. Nichols, 230 Houston Street, Atlanta, Georgia, would be thankful for any magazines or papers that may be sent her.

Miss Jennie Sikes, Diamond Hill, North Carolina, sixteen years of age, living in the country, unable to buy reading, and the support of an invalid mother, asks for something suitable for herself.

Youth's Companion for her twelve-year-old boy and reading for herself are asked for by Mrs. J. W. Burch, Allwood, Amherst County, Virginia.

Mrs. Walter Brown, Heareford, North Carolina, the mother of five children, the eldest seven years of age, asks for reading for herself and little girl.

Mr. C. C. Wright, Straw, North Carolina, opens school in July, and asks for the following books: Holmes's "Readers," Sanford's "Arithmetics," Maury's "Geographies," Harvey's "Grammars," Harrington's "Spellers," Steele's "Abridged Physiology and Hygiene," Worcester's or Webster's "Dictionaries," and Hansell's "Histories."

Mrs. Sue I. Deal, Cedar Valley, Caldwell County, North Carolina, would be glad to receive "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "The Pathfinder," "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush."

Mrs. A. Beck, 1032 Lawrence Street, Camden, New Jersey, asks for the *Ladies' Home Journal*.

Will any one who can send a copy of the *Christian Register* away each week after reading it communicate with Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Will the person who sends a copy of *The Cheerful Letter* to Mrs. E. C. Finlay (?), 4337 Carondelet Street, New Orleans, Louisiana, kindly send her name to Miss Langmaid?

NATURAL HISTORY.

DOORSTEP NEIGHBORS.

How little do we appreciate our opportunities for natural observation! A backyard city grass-plot, forsooth, what an invitation! The arena of the events which I am about to describe comprised a spot of almost bare earth less than one yard square, which lay at the base of the stone step to my studio door in the country. The surface of the ground was quite clean and baked in the sun. Sitting upon this threshold stone one morning in early summer, I permitted my eyes to scan the tiny patch of bare ground at my feet; and what I observed during a few moments suggested the present article as a suggestive tribute to the glory of the commonplace. The episodes which I shall describe represent the chronicle of a few hours of a day, though the same events

were seen in frequent repetition at intervals for months.

Perhaps the most conspicuous objects — if, indeed, a hole can be considered an "object" — were those two ever-present features of every trodden path and bare spot, ant-tunnels, and that other circular burrow, about the size of a quill, usually associated, and which is also commonly attributed to the ants. I counted seven of these smooth, clean holes within close range, three of them hardly more than an inch apart. They penetrated beyond the vision, and were evidently very deep. Knowing from past experience the wary tenant which dwelt within them, I adjusted myself to a comfortable attitude, and remained perfectly motionless. After a lapse of possibly five minutes I suddenly discovered that I could count but five holes; and, while recounting to make sure, my numeration was cut short at four. In another moment two more had disappeared, and the remaining two immediately followed.

The ground appeared absolutely level and unbroken. Were it not for the circular depression or "door-yard" around each hole, their location would have been almost impossible. A slight motion of one of my feet at this juncture, however, and, presto! what a change! Seven black holes in an instant. Another wait of five minutes, followed by the same hocus-pocus and the black spots, one by one, vanishing from sight. Locating the position of the hole by the little circular "door-yard," we can now distinguish a new feature not before noted, at the centre of each,— two sharp-curved prongs rising an inch or more above the surface and widely extended. How many a tragedy in the bug world has been enacted in these inviting, clean-swept little door-yards,— these pitfalls, so artfully closed in order that their design may be more surely effective!

These tunnels are commonly called "ant-holes," perhaps with some reason. It is true that ants are occasionally seen to go into them, but not by their own choice, while the most careful observer will wait in vain to see the ant come out again. Here is one approaching now,—a big red ant. He creeps this way and that, and anon is seen trespassing in the precinct of the unhealthy court. He crosses its centre when, click, and in an instant his place knows him no more; and a black spot marks the spot where he met his fate. A poor, unfortunate green caterpillar was induced to take a short cut across this nice, clean space to the clover beyond, and was the next martyr to my passion for original observation. He might have pursued his even course across the arena unharmed; but he, too, trespassed, and suddenly was seen to transform from a slow, creeping laggard into the liveliest acrobat, as he stood on his head and apparently dived precipitately into the hole which suddenly appeared beneath him.

The contrast of these clean-swept door-yards with the mound of débris of the ants suggested an investigation of the comparative methods of burrowing and the disposal of the excavated material. Here is a hole evidently some inches in depth: what has become of the earth removed? I swept into the openings of two or three of the holes a quantity of loose earth, and thus obliterated the opening of burrow, door-yard and all. I then entered my studio, and remained about fifteen minutes. Upon stealing to the doorway, I found that all the holes had reappeared, and was soon rewarded with a demonstration of the method of excavation. After a moment or two a pellet of earth seemed suddenly to rise from within the cavity, and, when arrived at the level of the ground, was suddenly shot forth a distance of five or six inches, as though thrown from a tiny, round, flat shovel, which suddenly flashed from the opening and as quickly retired to its depths, though not without a momentary display of two curved prongs and a formidable show of spider-like legs.

After a short space of time the act was repeated, this time a tiny stone being brought to the surface, and, after a brief pause at the door-way, was jerked to a distance as from a catapult. For an hour or more the bombardment of pellets and small stones continued from the mouth of the pit, and at length the hole disappeared, the earth in its vicinity presenting an apparently level surface. I concluded to explore the depths of one of these tunnels, as I desired a specimen of the tenant for portraiture. Taking a long culm of timothy grass, I inserted the tip into the burrow. It progressed about ten inches without impediment, then appeared to touch bottom. Withdrawing the grass, I found at the tip a grub. His body

is whitish and soft, with a huge hump on the lower back, armed with two small hooks. His enormous head is now seen to be apparently circular in outline, and we can readily see how perfectly it would fill the opening of the burrow. As he lies there, sprawling on his six spider-like legs, we may easily test the skill of his trap.

If with the point of our knife-blade, holding it in the direction of the insect's body, we now touch its tail, what a display of acrobatics! Instantly the agile body is bent backward in a loop, while the teeth fasten to the knife-blade with an audible click. We now see him crawling on his back,—for it is the under side of his head which is uppermost at the mouth of the burrow,—and his six zigzag legs are distorted backward to enable him to keep this contrary position. But this uncouth shape is not always thus retiring. A few glass tumblers inverted over as many of the larger holes during the summer will intercept the winged sprite into which he is shortly to be transfigured,—a brilliant, metallic-hued beetle, perhaps flashing with bronzy gold or glittering like an emerald,—the beautiful *cicindela*, or tiger-beetle, known to the populace, perhaps, simply as a glittering fly that revels in the hot summer sands of the seashore or dusty country road.—*From "My Studio Neighbors," by William Hamilton Gibson.*

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

[*All articles for this department should be sent to Mrs. J. S. Howe, Chestnut Street, Brookline, Mass.*]

"DO" AND "DON'T."

(*Concluded.*)

The truth is, it takes more genuine unselfish love constantly to keep our children busy with the right thing than it does to simply sit still and say: "No, Johnnie, don't do that." "No, you mustn't go there," etc. Yes, perhaps it is easier for the moment; but is it in the long run? I think not. It is our business to see that our children have proper employment: we have no moral right to do otherwise.

Children respond so quickly to the atmosphere about them, and are so ready to do the right thing, if we will but give them the opportunity! They *are not bad* or naughty; and we, as parents and teachers, must look upon them as rational, active, good children, ready to do the right, so far as they know it. Holding to this thought, then, of the innate goodness of children, it will not be necessary for a mother to put away all her pretty home ornaments and decorations. Children can easily be taught to admire and not to destroy them.

Suppose your eight-months or one-year old baby seems inclined to pull the plants to pieces, instead of saying, "No, no, don't touch, baby," try another way.

Go yourself with the baby up to the plants, and, with your own hands by your side, say: "Pretty, pretty plant! Baby, we will just *look* at it, so carefully. Oh, isn't it pretty?" or in some such way admire it *with* the child, but do not touch it yourself. After a little admiration, you can say, "By-by, little plant, some time we will come again."

Perhaps simply doing this once will not be sufficient to teach the little hands not to touch; but never mind. Do it again and again, until the lesson *is* learned; for, with patience and love on your part, I know it can be done. And is it not far better to have the child gain the victory for himself than to be taken away forcibly, with a "No, no, don't touch that"?

This admiring with the child can even be done before he shows any desire to demolish things; and so, by a little thoughtful care on our part, many of the occasions where we might be tempted quickly and thoughtlessly to say, "Don't," can be done away with.

Suppose one child is teasing another. Instead of always noticing it, the mother can say, with much enthusiasm, and as if there could be nothing nicer: "O, Johnnie, just come and look out of this window, and see if you can see any horse! Do you suppose you could?" Then show a little interest yourself in the horses you see. A child, perhaps, is throwing his playthings. Quickly comes, in a loving voice from mamma, "O Johnnie, run quickly and get a pencil and paper, and come and write a letter to papa," or, "Oh, go to the blackboard and draw a picture, and see if I can *guess* what you have drawn."

Often I have quieted very noisy, romping children with, "Hark! let's see if we can hear the clock tick: what does it say?" or

"Now we will all listen, and tell what we hear out of doors." These are but a few of the endless variety of ways in which we can avoid the frequent use of negatives. More, similar to these, will occur to any mother who thinks there is a better way of teaching obedience and self-freedom than by the constant use of negatives.

Children brought up in this atmosphere of definite doing, blossom and shine forth as flowers in the sunlight. Then every movement will show a definiteness and positiveness which, in this age of indefinite "don't know," is most refreshing, and is a happy omen for the rising generation.

Stronger and stronger comes to me the assurance that it is a privilege to be with these blessed little children, and that there is no nobler work than to really live with them.

A MOTHER.

AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Please send all material for this department to Miss E. D. Chapman, 34 Buckingham Street, Cambridge, Mass.]

ENIGMA.

My *whole* of 30 letters is a very familiar quotation from one of Shakespeare's plays. Each of the following is a character in one or other of the plays described, generally in his own words: —

5, 26, 7, 25, 6, 4. "I have that within which passeth show." 14, 4, 5, 28, 2, 22, 14. "My demerits may speak unbonneted to as proud fortune as this I have reached." 17, 27, 15. "I dare not fight, but I will wink and hold out mine iron." 24, 29, 14, 30, 24, 19, 20, 14. "With my nobler reason 'gainst my fury do I take part." 12, 8, 30, 12, 16, 18, 14, 11, 1.

"A maid so tender, fair, and happy,
So opposite to marriage that she shunned
The wealthy curlèd darlings of our nation."
10, 12, 1, 7. "Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty." 14, 20, 25, 26, 9, 12, 14. "Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy." 3, 21, 10, 29. "He but usurped his life." 13, 14, 2, 30, 28, 23.

"You are not to be taught
That you have many enemies that know not
Why they are so, but, like to village curs,
Bark when their fellows do."

E. L. CHASE.

CHARADE.

1.

My lady sits in the firelight dim
In dreamy revery,
Watching the shadows on my *third*
Play fantastically.

Lower sinks the fire, and soon
The room in darkness leaves;
But in her brain is reflected the glow,
And my *second* and *first* she weaves.

Could you but learn all she plans and does,
As the long hours come and go,
In music, painting, and the like,
You would call her my *whole*, I know.

E. P. P.

2.

Ding, dong, bell,
My *first* is down the well,
Not beast feline,
But sharp canine.
My *second* is his mistress' name:
His funeral dirge doth sound the same.
My *whole* is but a single grain
Which in a husk hath often lain.

From "Sphinx-Lore."

ARITHMETICAL PUZZLE.

Plant 9 trees in 10 rows, but have 3 trees in each row.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN JULY NUMBER.

CHARADES.

1. Cheerful Letter.
2. Matrimony.

NUTS TO CRACK.

1. A cent and a quarter,—26 cents.
2. 3, 9, 3.

DROP LETTER PUZZLE.

Go to town
To show your gown.
Go to Troy
To stop your boy
From going on
To fool poor John.

CONUNDRUM.

Because it's the Fourth of July.

Some murmur, when their sky is clear
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue.
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied.
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How love has in their aid
(Love that not ever seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.

—*Trench.*

Hope will continue in the other life; and this means that there will be progress hereafter as well as here. To hope means to look forward to something better; but, unless that something better can be reached, the hope must perish. Therefore, continued hope implies continued progress.— *J. F. C.*

When a man is not on terms with himself, he is not on terms with anything. The disaster is not a single one. He shows it in everything; and much of his conduct, his treatment of others, his opinions, mysterious as they may seem, are but the inevitable outcroppings of his self-disturbance.— *J. F. C.*

We do not begin and just grow easily and pleasantly,. but through all sorts of pains and aches and mishaps,— the frictions, jars, antagonisms, of other things. Our moral hindrances naturally divide themselves into two classes,— those from within, self-born, nurtured, grown; those from without, which have no self about them.— *J. F. C.*

Life is the opportunity of the soul.

Virtue is the only princely thing upon earth.— *O. Dewey.*

No view of life can be a right one which is not a joyous one.

That which we live we believe; . . . for faith is the food of life.

Difficulty is the very school of culture and progress.— *O. Dewey.*

He who does not reverence his own nature does not reverence God.

A guilty weight upon the heart takes the sun out of the sky.— *Thom.*

The spirit in man can be sustained only on that which is spiritual and infinite.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

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During Miss Clarke's absence in Europe, Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass., will act as editor.

The summer address of our treasurer will be Miss Louise Howe, Box 21, Nahant, Mass. But subscriptions may be left for her at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., *at any season.*

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EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, —Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 3 Webster Street, Allston, Mass.

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